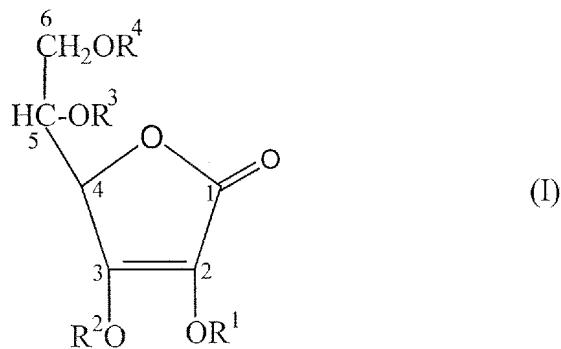


Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Previously Presented)** A compound of the general formula I:



wherein R¹ is a C₈-C₁₈ acyl group, an amino acid group, or a C₁-C₁₇ alkyl group; R² is ammonium, a monovalent metal cation of Na⁺ or K⁺, a divalent alkaline earth metal cation of Mg⁺⁺, Ca⁺⁺ or Ba⁺⁺, or a trivalent metal cation of Al⁺⁺⁺ or Fe⁺⁺⁺; and each of R³ or R⁴, independently, is hydrogen, a C₂-C₂₂ acyl group, an amino acid residue, or a C₁-C₁₇ alkyl group.

2. **(Currently Amended)** A compound according to claim 1 wherein R² is ammonium or a monovalent metal cation of Na⁺[[,]] or K⁺.

3. **(Currently Amended)** A compound according to
claim 1 wherein R² is a divalent alkaline earth metal cation of
Mg⁺⁺, Ca⁺⁺[[,]] or Ba⁺⁺ or a trivalent metal cation of Al⁺⁺⁺ or
Fe⁺⁺⁺.

4. **(Previously Presented)** A compound according to
claim 1 wherein R² is Na⁺, K⁺, Mg⁺⁺, or Ca⁺⁺.

5. **(Previously Presented)** A compound according to
claim 1 wherein R¹ is a C₈-C₁₈ carboxylic acyl group derived from
a straight or branched, saturated or unsaturated carboxylic acid
selected from caprylic, capric, undecanoic, lauric, tridecanoic,
myristic, pentadecanoic, palmitic, palmitoleic, stearic, oleic,
linoleic, or linolenic acid.

Claim 6 **(Cancelled)**.

7. **(Previously Presented)** A compound according to
claim 5 wherein R¹ is capryloyl or palmitoyl.

8. **(Original)** A compound according to claim 1
wherein R¹ is the residue of a natural α -amino acid such as
glycine, alanine, serine, leucine, isoleucine, phenylalanine,
tyrosine or glutamic acid.

9. **(Original)** A compound according to claim 1
wherein R¹ is the residue of glycine.

10. **(Previously Presented)** A compound according to
claim 1 wherein R³ and R⁴ are hydrogen, R² is ammonium, or a
monovalent metal cation of Na⁺ or K⁺, a divalent alkaline earth
metal cation of Mg⁺⁺, Ca⁺⁺ or Ba⁺⁺ or a trivalent metal cation of
Al⁺⁺⁺ or Fe⁺⁺⁺, and R¹ is a C₈-C₁₈ acyl derived from a fatty acid.

11. **(Currently Amended)** A compound according to
claim 10 wherein R² is a monovalent metal cation of selected from
Na⁺ or K⁺, or a divalent metal cation of selected from Mg⁺⁺
or Ca⁺⁺.

12. **(Original)** The compound according to claim 1
wherein R³ and R⁴ are hydrogen, R² is Na⁺ and R¹ is capryloyl.

13. **(Original)** The compound according to claim 1
wherein R³ and R⁴ are hydrogen, R² is Na⁺ and R¹ is palmitoyl.

14. **(Previously Presented)** A composition comprising
as an active ingredient a compound according to claim 1.

15. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical composition
according to claim 14 for treatment of conditions, diseases or

disorders associated with vitamin C deficiency and/or where a supplemental administration of vitamin C may be beneficial.

16. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 for treatment of cancer.

17. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16 further comprising lipoic acid or a chemotherapeutic agent.

18. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 15 for enhancement of the immune system.

19. **(Original)** A nutraceutical composition according to claim 14, optionally comprising other nutraceuticals.

20. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical or nutraceutical composition according to claim 14 adapted for oral administration, optionally in the form of micro/nanocapsules confining an effective amount of the compound of formula (I).

21. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 for topical use.

22. **(Original)** A cosmetic composition according to claim 14 together with cosmetic applicable carriers, excipients or diluents.

23. **(Original)** A cosmetic composition according to claim 22 for topical application for skin care.

24. **(Original)** A cosmetic composition according to claim 23 for reducing fine lines, wrinkles or skin roughness, skin whitening or stimulation of collagen synthesis.

25. **(Original)** A cosmetic composition according to claim 24 for use as anti-aging agent.

26. **(Original)** A cosmetic composition according to claim 24 for treatment of photodamaged skin.

27. **(Original)** A cosmetic composition according to claim 22 in the form of a lotion, cream, gel, or in liquid form.

28. **(Original)** The cosmetic composition according to claim 22 for use as moisturizing cream, anti-ageing cream, anti-wrinkle cream, sunscreen cream, skin whitening and for stimulating collagen synthesis.

29. **(Original)** The cosmetic composition according to claim 22 further comprising one or more active ingredients such as vitamin E, vitamin P, retinol, retinol esters, hyaluronic acid, and/or algal extracts.

30. **(Original)** A dermatological composition according to claim 14 for treating or controlling skin states or conditions associated with vitamin C deficiency and/or where a supplemental administration of vitamin C may be beneficial.

31. **(Original)** A method of skin care, particularly for reducing fine lines, wrinkles and skin roughness, or for stimulation of collagen synthesis in a mammal in need thereof, which comprises topically administering a composition comprising a compound of general formula (I) of claim 1 to said mammal in need.